DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 194 SP 038 138

AUTHOR Alban, Theresa; Proffitt, Thomas D.; SySantos, Christine
TITLE Defining Performance Based Assessment within a Community of Learners: The Challenge & the Promise.
PUB DATE 1998-02-28
NOTE 5p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (New Orleans, LA, February 25-28, 1998).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College School Cooperation; Elementary Education; Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; Mentors; *Performance Based Assessment; Preservice Teacher Education; *Professional Development Schools; *Student Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Collaboration; Teacher Competencies; *Teacher Competency Testing
IDENTIFIERS Towson State University MD

ABSTRACT

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) enhances collaboration among states rethinking teacher assessment for initial licensing and for preparation and induction into teaching. Towson University's Elementary Education Department adopted INTASC's standards for its teacher education program. In a pilot program involving a Baltimore County public elementary school and Towson University, course outcomes reflecting INTASC standards became the core of a performance-based assessment program for teacher interns. Through ongoing collaboration with mentor teachers, the university instructor established an observation/evaluation instrument for assessing preservice teachers' performance. A beginning performance portfolio complemented the assessment instrument. Towson University offered a graduate course in which classroom teachers interested in supervising preservice teachers worked with university personnel to identify experiences and performances and construct evaluation instruments that guided and reflected the developmental process for interns. They also constructed guidelines/requirements for portfolio assessment. Interns piloted the assessment model in the Professional Development School. Classroom observations were conducted using the observation tools for five teaching competencies. The checklists became the vehicle for structuring conferences about teaching performance. When the semester ended, the supervising teacher, intern, and university supervisor completed an evaluation for each competency using the summative rating sheets. Next, interns piloted the Portfolio Exhibition. The interns' portfolios were examined and evaluated with portfolio rating sheets. Graduate course participants reconvened to examine comments from supervising teachers, interns, and university supervisors regarding implementation of the assessment model and are now making refinements. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 424 194

DEFINING PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT WITHIN A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Theresa Alban
Towson University
Towson, MD 21252

Thomas D. Proffitt
Towson University
Towson, MD 21252

Christine SySantos
Baltimore County Public Schools
Baltimore, Maryland 21204

Paper prepared for presentation at the
AACTE 1998 Annual Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana
February, 1998

SP 038 138

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Proffitt

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Defining Performance Based Assessment
in a Community of Learners:
The Challenge & the Promise

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you are going so that you better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.

Stephen Covey

Background:

Efforts to restructure our nation's schools for the demands of a knowledge-based economy have redefined the mission of schooling and the job of teaching. This new mission requires substantially more knowledge and skill of teachers and more student-centered approaches to teaching and learning.

As one of the cascade of initiatives that have been undertaken to strengthen the teaching profession, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers, was established in 1987 to enhance collaboration among states interested in rethinking teacher assessment for initial licensing as well as for preparation and induction into the profession. INTASC members are united in their view that the complex art of teaching requires *performance-based standards* and *assessment strategies* that are capable of capturing teachers' reasoned judgments and that evaluate what they can actually do in authentic teaching situations.

Under sponsorship by the Council of Chief State School Officers, INTASC established a task force to consider standards for entry into the teaching profession standards that embody the kinds of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teachers need to practice responsibly as they enter teaching. The starting point for the task force was to articulate performance based standards for a common core of teaching knowledge and skills that all new teachers must know and be able to do. Like the first tier of assessment for licensing in virtually all professions, this "common core" outlines the common principles and foundations of professional practice -- the knowledge of student learning and development, curriculum and teaching, contexts and purposes which creates a set of professional understandings, abilities, and commitments that all teachers share.

Performance Based Assessment: A Shared Responsibility

Given the context of recent national and state reform initiatives encouraging/mandating performance based assessment of preservice teachers, the purpose of this presentation is to outline a promising practice that attempts to incorporate several elements of performance based assessment for preservice teachers--from identification of standards to exposition of specific indicators, elements and levels of performance and means of assessment. In a proactive attempt to take charge of this teacher education initiative, this innovative program will be described from its development to implementation within a Professional Development School, reflecting a new form of shared responsibility for teacher education.

The Elementary Education Department of Towson University decided to adopt the INTASC standards as the performance based outcomes for its teacher education program. The INTASC standards became the framework for course development and specific course objectives, and therefore gave direction to the multi-faceted assessment of preservice teachers.

In a pilot program at Owings Mills Elementary School in the Towson University/ Baltimore County Public Schools Professional Development School Network, these course outcomes reflecting INTASC standards became the core of a performance based assessment program for teacher interns. Through ongoing collaboration with the classroom teachers who would serve as mentors for the preservice students, the university instructor established an observation/evaluation instrument which would be used to assess the preservice teacher's performance. Specific indicators for the INTASC standards were identified collaboratively and a rating scale reflecting progress was developed. This instrument was used by the preservice teacher (as self-reflection), mentor teacher, and university instructor in evaluating performance. Complementing this assessment instrument was a required, beginning performance portfolio, which preservice teachers created to demonstrate evidence of achievement of the indicators for the INTASC standards.

As these interns prepared to move into their final year in the PDS program, the need to continue and refine this process became evident. Towson University offered a graduate course in which classroom teachers, with expertise and interest in supervising preservice teachers, worked with university personnel and external consultants to identify the experiences and/or performances (based on course objectives, guided by INTASC standards) and construct evaluation instruments that guided and reflected the developmental process for the interns. Course participants were also able to construct guidelines/requirements for portfolio assessment, a systematic method for the collection and assessment of evidence, which demonstrates performance of the INTASC standards and becomes a part of the final evaluation before graduation.

In the fall semester of 1997, twenty interns piloted the assessment model in the Owings Mills Professional Development School. Classroom observations were conducted using the observation tools for five teaching competencies: classroom management, planning for instruction, instructional delivery, assessment, and communication/human relations skills. These checklists became the vehicle to structure conferences about teaching performance. At the end of the semester, the supervising teacher, intern, and university supervisor completed an evaluation for each competency using the summative rating sheets. Comments reflected the areas of performance which were strengths and identified areas to target for improvement. The interns were also assessed on the performance portfolio they had compiled.

In January 1998, fourteen interns participated in the pilot of the Portfolio Exhibition. Teams of reviewers were formed using College of Education faculty (in and out of Elementary Education), Baltimore County Public Schools teachers (from Owings Mills Elementary School and other PDS), Baltimore County Public Schools Staff Development Supervisors and Principals, Maryland State Department of Education Program Approval Specialists, Howard County (MD) Public School teachers and Staff Development personnel, and visitors from higher education institutions outside of Maryland. The interns' portfolios were examined and evaluated using the portfolio rating sheets on organization and content. Review teams met individually with interns to conduct an interview about the portfolio as it related to their teaching performance, and provided constructive feedback on the process and products.

In February 1998, graduate course participants reconvened to examine comments from supervising teachers, interns, and university supervisors regarding implementation of the assessment model. Refinements are being made and will be implemented in the spring semester of 1998.

Development and implementation of this program has not been without obstacles. Although the evaluation instruments are very specific, there is still some inconsistency among evaluators. Additionally, converting these performance based measures to grades becomes yet another difficult task. The time and labor intensive nature of the performance based assessment process remains a challenge to implementation in a teacher education program as large as Towson University. Finally, there is the realization that this will always be a work in progress, as collaborative input enables continuous refinement.